

Men and women of Harlech – rails in Wales special report



CARWYN JONES: Building a better a railway
SIMON WELLER: The position on pensions
GREGOR GALL: Myth of the market

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Our goodwill facilitates running of the railway

Shoddy of TOCs to try to blame drivers

APPARENTLY it's our fault every time a train is cancelled due to staff shortages! Nothing to do with the continual carving of the franchise map, which leads to forced transfer, or lethargy, by franchises in the last year as they maximise their profits and have no incentive to invest! The privatised train operating companies operate not in the best interests of our industry, or their employees, but solely for their shareholders. ASLEF grows 5% year on year because we insist on linking rest day working to recruitment and training or major projects. No company should ever claim driver shortages are down to sickness or leave because the establishment calculators are meant to include leave, sickness, civic duties, rules, training etc. It's your goodwill that facilitates the running of the railway and its growth so the next time a TOC tries to blame drivers, for its own failings, and leaves us open to abuse or possible assault perhaps we should show the public how bad it would be if we did not give up our free time?

The recent announcement by the Mayor of London that all suburban services will be run by TfL is a bit of a red herring because all that is happening is a consultation to canvass views on such a move. It's left me with mixed emotions because, on a policy level, we should welcome services coming back under public control but our experience of TfL, as a poor employer that operates in bad faith, has damaged our trust. This without the implications for our members across the south-east and the uncertainty it may bring.

It's strange to be scapegoated for the delivery of poor services and driver availability when, in the freight sector, the announcement of a further 83 redundancies is a direct result of the government's tax on coal that has seen 16% of freight traffic lost for ever, and this ahead of the impact on freight drivers of the cuts in the steel industry. We are, as ever, doing all we can to mitigate the impact and secure the best deals possible for those involved as well as seeking to bring forward vacancies for train drivers. Our thoughts are with all our freight drivers, and their families, during this difficult time.

The article in last month's *Journal* on Sundays in the working week has reignited an age-old and passionate debate and made me wonder why in many companies this alleged special day is not worth as much in rostering, and therefore financial, terms as other days of the week?

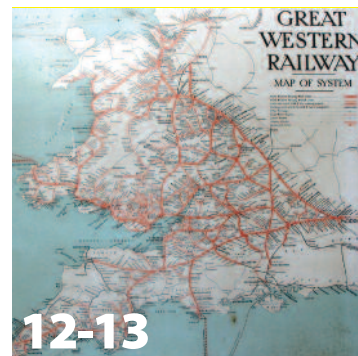
Yours fraternally

Mick Whelan, general secretary



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Time to act says Mick

MICK Whelan, ASLEF's general secretary, is calling on Patrick McLoughlin to step in and solve the crisis in the rail freight industry. Mick has told the Secretary of State for Transport:

'You will be aware of the many difficulties faced by the rail freight industry and will appreciate the destructive impact which government energy policy, in particular, has had on the sector. I am very

concerned about the long-term impact of an ever-downward shift in coal and steel traffic in the UK on companies operating in a sector which has recently seen many hundreds of train drivers made redundant. You will know that FOCs operate in a volatile market and do not enjoy the safety net of the public purse like train operating companies.

'You will further be aware that the rail freight sector is vital to the ongoing

maintenance and renewal of the UK rail network. I am worried that the current downturn in the sector, and a shortage of train drivers, will negatively impact upon the sector's capacity to deliver this important and safety-critical work. I am also concerned at how this contraction will affect its ability to conduct future investment and infrastructure work on behalf of Network Rail.'

Mick met Nicola Shaw, the chief executive of HS1 who is preparing a report into the future of Network Rail, on 16 February to raise our concerns about the future of freight.

Freedom and democracy

Mick Whelan has reminded the Tories that 'Trade unions are voluntary, democratic organisations, essential in a free society. No other organisations face such state intrusion or restriction on their activities.' Mick was speaking at the Campaign for Trade Union Freedom's spring rally at the Mander Hall at Hamilton House in central London on 11 February. He said: 'The Trade Union Bill is the work of a vindictive Tory Party using the levers of power for its own ends to outlaw legitimate



Mick and the ASLEF crew help launch the TUC's Love Unions week

protest, stifle free speech and choke off the resources of political opponents. It should be opposed not just by every union activist,

every socialist, and every member of the Labour Party, but by everyone who cherishes freedom, democracy and the rule of law.'

TfL takeover

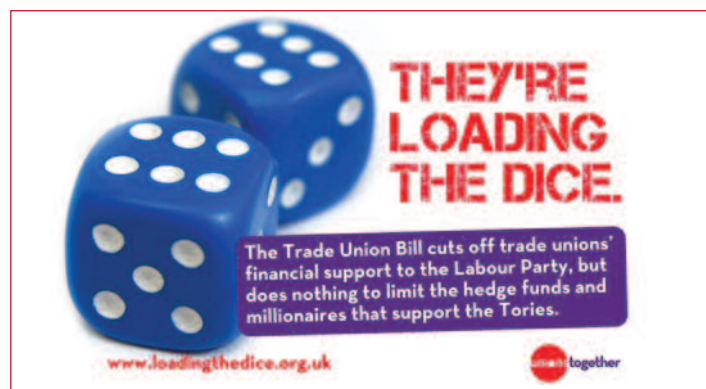
Transport for London is taking over all suburban rail services into the capital – from Hertford, Dartford, Sevenoaks, and Chessington – and rebranding them as London Overground.

'Our railways have been the workhorse of the economy in London and the south-east since Victorian times,' said London Mayor Boris Johnson. 'This should give the capital, and surrounding areas, the services they deserve.'

No train crew – blame the TOCs

GS Mick Whelan, speaking to BBC transport correspondent Richard Westcott as part of a package for BBC News about train delays and cancellations, said: 'Delays caused by a shortage of drivers are down to the train operating companies not recruiting enough drivers to provide the services they promise, in their franchise applications, to run.' DO5 Nigel Gibson told BBC Essex: 'C2C, like most of the privatised train companies, don't employ enough drivers.' And NO Simon Weller, speaking on Radio London, said: 'It's all about cost; the fewer drivers they employ, the more money they make. But they are dependent on every driver turning up for work. When there is sickness, holiday, or time off after a fatality then the TOCs are stretched and they cancel trains. They need to recruit more drivers.'

ATW: ASLEF's executive committee has suspended industrial action at Arriva Trains Wales pending the result of a referendum of members. The EC is recommending acceptance of a revised package offered by the company.



DfT SLAMMED BY PAC

The House of Commons Public Accounts Committee, examining the government's rail franchising programme, has criticised the Department for Transport for 'gaps in its ability to manage contracts effectively.' In a further blow to Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin and the Tories' failed policy of privatisation, the committee says it is 'not clear' when passengers will see promised improvements in service.

PASSENGERS WANT A HUMAN FACE

A new report from Transport Focus, *Passenger Attitudes Towards Rail Staff*, reveals the importance rail workers have for passengers. 'Despite all the technological changes, passengers still value the human face,' said TF chief executive Anthony Smith. 'Especially in providing guidance when purchasing tickets; providing meaningful information when there are delays and disruptions; and in giving reassurance about security on trains and at stations.'

TfN NIX NOYSTER

Passengers in the north of England won't get a 'Noyster' card – a contactless plastic smart card based on the Oyster ticket on London Underground – after officials decided the 'new' technology is now out of date. Nor will a new east-west rail link be 'Crossrail for the north' after Transport for the North chief executive David Brown took umbrage. 'I want something that is northern, not a southern solution,' he said. 'We want big, fast, frequent trains.'

TWEETS OF THE MONTH



Kids not cuts.
Scottish Labour



I have a vision for making London better for all Londoners, and a real plan for making it a reality.
Sadiq Khan



Kez says 'We can break from austerity.'
Neil Findlay

Mail Rail under London to open

PART of the Mail Rail, a 22 mile network of 2ft gauge lines taking post between Paddington, King's Cross and six major London sorting offices, is to open to the public next year. A £26m project

backed by the Heritage Lottery Fund is rebuilding the Royal Mail museum at Mount Pleasant, once the biggest sorting office in the world, and restoring a stretch of the line as

a visitor attraction. Mail Rail opened in 1927, with trains running every five minutes at peak hours, but closed in 2003 because most of the sorting offices it served had been sold off.

TransFeline Success

Felix, a five-year-old cat on TransPennine Express, has been purrmoted to senior pest controller and given a new hi-vis jacket and personalised cat flap for keeping platforms at Huddersfield



Felix the cat is the purrfect deterrent

station rodent-free. 'Felix purrseveres,' said a TPE

spokesperson. 'She's furry, furry good at the job.'

BY THE LEFT

A short trial at Holborn station asking passengers to stand on the left, as well as on the right, of Underground escalators has apparently resulted in an increase in 'passenger traffic' and an easing of congestion. TfL concedes, though, that the experiment caused 'confusion and frustration,' and admits that persuading passengers to abandon the convention of standing on the right, and walking on the left, will be very hard.

QUOTE...

'Politicians need to get off their knees with the likes of Google.' **Andrew Rawnsley in The Observer**
...UNQUOTE



Graham Hughes, a driver with Chiltern Railways, raised £500 for the Willen Hospice, Milton Keynes, in November. Here he is with, and without, his whiskers.

CONFERENCES: The **Scottish TUC** is at the Caird Hall in Dundee from Monday 18 to Wednesday 20 April. ASLEF's **annual assembly of delegates** is at the Macdonald Highlands hotel, Aviemore, from Monday 9 to Friday 13 May. The **Welsh TUC** is at the Venue Cymru in Llandudno from Tuesday 24 to Thursday 26 May. The **Durham Miners' Gala** is on Saturday 9 July. The **Tolpuddle Martyrs' festival**, near Dorchester, is from Friday 15 to Sunday 17 July. The **Trades Union Congress** is at the Brighton Centre from Sunday 11 to Wednesday 14 September. The **Labour Party conference** is at the BT convention centre in Liverpool from Sunday 25 to Wednesday 28 September.

Off the rails



MAXINE PEAKE, who made her name as Twinkle in *Dinnerladies*, Veronica in *Shameless*, and Martha in *Silk*, and who wowed audiences with a stunning female *Hamlet* at the Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester, played Rebekah Brooks in *Red Top*. Brooks, says Maxine, is good at

'getting from men what she wants to get. That's not a feminist role model. It's like when people say Thatcher was a feminist. These women get to positions of power, but at what cost? They don't take other females with them. It's not, "Come on, sisters, let's get up the slippery pole together." It's, "I'll get up and kick you with my stiletto back down."' Maxine backed Jeremy Corbyn for the Labour leadership – 'I love him' – and loathes David Cameron. 'At least Thatcher knew she was an evil witch. The government now is much smoother.'



GEORGE OSBORNE, *The Man Who Would Be King*, has upset Tory activists by flying around the country in a helicopter to schmooze the grassroots ahead of his battle with Boris Johnson, Theresa May and Liam Fox for the Tory crown when DC

steps down. Property developer Anthony Gallagher stumped up £8,000 for the Chancellor's chopper. Gallagher has benefited big time from the man in the hi-vis jacket's development drive. His companies own 35,000 house building plots around Britain, so an £8,000 whirlybird was a good investment to keep the Chancellor sweet and make sure the money keeps rolling in...



CHRIS GRAYLING – known at Westminster, on both sides of the House, as the Gray Thing – was the subject of a wicked profile by Tom Peck in *The Independent*. 'For the failed public servant with an affable manner and a triptych of anecdotes, there is always the after dinner circuit. Tony Blair once famously pocketed £50,000 for a speech to an audience of toilet roll manufacturers. Grayling is no Blair but, as he made his way out of a lunch held in his honour, he left behind not a stain of evidence that you would even be inclined to pity him with 50p for three sheets of three-ply in a nightclub toilet.'



MATTHEW NORMAN, describing Michael Dugher as 'the genius who ran Andy Burnham's wildly successful leadership campaign' and Simon Danczuk as 'the Don Juan of Rochdale, sexting a 17-year-old looking for a job in your office,' dryly points out that 'Jeremy Corbyn has his problems, but you cannot deny he's unusually blessed when it comes to his enemies.'

THE Home Office pinged out a press release announcing Theresa May's new English tests for migrants. Theresa's top minion trumpeted: 'New English language [sic] test for family route migrants.' Trust Mother will be quick to name, shame and deport the person responsible...

500 CLUB: Paddington branch, with number 182, won the March draw, scooping the RMS prize money jackpot of £356.

Potential pitfalls and mess room banter

IGGY BULAK, Wimbledon branch equality representative, reports on ASLEF's equality and diversity course

MY FIRST encounter with TUC/ASLEF training was towards the end of 2014 when I attended a TUC health & safety reps course at South Thames College. I remember a very enthusiastic trainer telling us how many aspects of our lives new legislation would affect. I wasn't really aware just how much the personality of that trainer, and the new Act, would influence me in the months ahead.

Towards the end of that course a few of the participants were invited to go on to do an occupational health & safety diploma, and, luckily, I was among them. At first I was

apprehensive, but reassurances from TUC training staff gave me just the right push to give it a go! Now I have completed the diploma I would recommend it to anyone, and cannot praise highly enough the course tutor whose patience, understanding and guidance got everyone through!

Having acquired that qualification, I can see why ASLEF encourages its reps along the road of personal development. Indeed, the knowledge acquired has helped me, practically, in my rep's role and proved to be an invaluable asset.

As we all have seen, as reps, aspects of the Equality Act appearing in our daily working



ASLEF reps on course at the GMB's head office in Stephenson Way, Euston

lives, we have begun to understand the potential pitfalls for our members and employers and, from a personal perspective, worrying issues have arisen from so-called mess room banter. It was this aspect that made me realise further training was required so I applied to attend a two day ASLEF equality and diversity course in January.

It came as no surprise that the tutor's enthusiasm and

knowledge shone through and, together with the willingness of course participants to engage with frankness and honesty, given the delicate topics we covered, it made for a truly informative and enjoyable experience. I came away with only one regret which was that, due to an early start the following day, I was unable to join them for liquid refreshments, and a networking exercise, down the road! Hopefully, next time...



Mick Whelan joins Nigel Holness, programme director of MTR Crossrail, at Canary Wharf to see the new station platforms

Work makes us happy – and well paid work makes us happier still

Real wages of ordinary hard-working men and women in Britain are down 9% since the Great Recession started in 2008 and down 2.5% since the Tories were first elected in 2010 and the Conservatives launched their Age of Austerity. 'At the same time the incomes and the wealth of those at the top have risen sharply,' said David Blanchflower, Professor of Economics at Dartmouth College, one of the eight elite

Ivy League universities in the United States, and an adviser to Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell. 'The Conservative argument – that you pay the poor less and they work harder, but pay the rich more and they work harder – makes no sense at all. Work makes people happy. Well-paid work makes them happier still. It is perfectly sound economics to try to make the system fairer.'

QUOTE...

'In Scotland, the divide is no longer between left and right, but unionist and nationalist.' – **George Eaton** in the *New Statesman*

...UNQUOTE



Marz Colombini models ASLEF's Kes tee-shirt – with a Harvey Smith to the Tories' anti-Trade Union Bill – based on the iconic image from the famous Ken Loach film. £10 (inc p&p); email admin@aslef.org.uk or visit our online shop at www.aslef.org.uk



Tosh McDonald, EC president, congratulates District 4 WRC rep Nicky Sapey on her marriage to Kelly.

BABCOCK PAY FOR BREACH OF RULES

Babcock Rail has been fined £400,000 for breaching health and safety regulations after a worker was trapped between a digger and a platform in Flintshire, north Wales. Lee Woolly was helping to replace track at Hope station in March 2013. He was fortunate not to have been killed, Mold crown court was told. Babcock Rail admitted the charges and was ordered to pay £33,400 costs. 'This was an avoidable incident which left a rail worker with serious injuries,' said Ian Prosser, chief inspector of railways at the ORR. 'Safety of rail workers is one of the regulator's key priorities and we will take appropriate action against companies or individuals wherever failings are found.'

HOWARD COPS COMMISSIONER RUN

Howard Kaye, EC member for District 5, has been selected as the Labour Party candidate to run in the election for Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey. The incumbent, Kevin Hurley, originally sought nomination as the Conservative Party candidate but, when defeated in the selection process, stood as an independent in 2012. The election is on Thursday 5 May.

Taking the message from Witham to Westminster

KHALID RANA reports from the East of England Labour Party policy forum

THE Labour Hall in Witham was packed to capacity with 150 people on 30 January for a meeting for members in the region to give direction to the National Policy Forum about the Labour Party's transport policy. ASLEF was represented by DO5 Nigel Gibson, EC5 Howard Kaye, Les Bennett of Bishop's Stortford, Mark Daniels of

Barking main line and Khalid Rana of Gidea Park. Howard spoke from the platform about the issues our industry faces and highlighted problems at East Coast since it was re-privatised by the Tory Party. He was followed Lilian Greenwood, the Shadow Secretary of State for Transport, and Daniel Zeichner, MP for Cambridge.

Members then split into groups, one of which was chaired by Mark, and another by me, for sessions on transport and infrastructure in our region. Lilian



ASLEF delegates Les, Nigel, Khalid, Howard and Mark with Labour's Shadow Transport Secretary Lilian Greenwood

assured us that what we debated would be taken back to the NPF. I believe it was a worthwhile and positive opportunity for ASLEF and Labour Party members to

influence the policy of our party. And it demonstrates that the inclusivity we hear about from the leadership is now one of the Labour Party's core values.

Banner man held the banner high

LGBT representatives' committee national secretary DARRAN BROWN reports from the Left Bank in Manchester

I recently visited the People's History Museum in Manchester, a great but much-neglected place, where you can see exhibitions about the past, and the suffering, of ordinary working-class people. It covers socio-political activities, reveals the injustices suffered by

workers from the Corn Laws, the banning of working-class newspapers, the Peterloo Massacre, the difference between various political ideologies, the history of the NHS, popular working-class pastimes and much, much more.

No working-class



history could be complete without trade unions and it's here, I'm proud to say, that we, ASLEF, put up our colours for all to see. On the third floor, with a number of other union banners, is the ASLEF LGBT banner, donated by the LGBT committee to the museum so it may live on and be seen and appreciated by all who visit. This is the only piece of

ASLEF on display in Spinningfields

ASLEF history the museum has and they were extremely pleased when we offered it to them. If you are in Manchester, do go along; you're sure to learn something you didn't know.

QUOTE...

'The very worst day in government is immeasurably better than the best day in opposition.' – Jim Murphy in the New Statesman

...UNQUOTE

WMD IN ALBERT SQUARE

District 3 is meeting at 11am in Albert Square, Manchester, to mark Workers' Memorial Day on Thursday 28 April. 'With the draconian Trade Union Bill it's more important this year than ever that our voices are heard,' says Alan Moss. 'Because the government's attacks on health & safety reps will have an effect on people's safety at work and, ultimately, cost lives.' Contact Alan (07917 063665) or Colin Smith (07977 142460) to show your support.

PRICE NOT RIGHT

Joanna Whittington has been appointed interim chief executive of the Office of Rail and Road after Richard Price, accused by MPs on the Public Accounts Committee of being 'asleep on the job', stepped down two months early.



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£2.5bn new Tube trains for London

LONDON Underground has finally launched its much-delayed invitation to tender for new Tube trains to serve the Piccadilly, Waterloo & City, Bakerloo and Central lines. The order – expected to cost between £1 billion and £2.5 billion – was originally pencilled in for February last year, rescheduled to December, and then moved to the start of this year. Five manufacturers – Alstom, Bombardier, CAF, Hitachi and Siemens – will now prepare bids.

The new 250 train fleet – 100 for the Piccadilly, 100 for the Central, 40 on the Bakerloo and 10 on the Waterloo & City – will feature air-conditioned, walk-through carriages with widened doors and should help increase capacity when they come into service in the early 2020s.

Nick Brown, LU's managing director, said: 'More people are using the Underground than at any point in its 153 year history. The new Tube trains will transform the journeys of millions of customers, providing trains fit for a world-class city for the next five decades.'

Finn Brennan, District 8 Organiser, said: 'We

DO8 Finn Brennan welcomes new investment

welcome the investment – it's long overdue – and, despite Boris Johnson's political posturing, these won't be driverless trains.' Finn added: 'There will always need to be a trained person in a dedicated cab to deal with emergencies. As London's population keeps growing, and services continue to expand, Tube drivers and our trade union, ASLEF, will be here for generations to come. There is one point on which we agree with the Mayor of London; when these new trains eventually turn up, they will not have old fashioned cabs. Because we will insist on comfortable modern cabs in which our members will work.'

SELLING BRITAIN SHORT

The House of Commons Public Accounts Committee has slammed the government over the sale of Eurostar, condemning its 'tendency to undervalue public assets it is selling.' Mick Whelan said: 'Once more, this Conservative government has sold Britain short. Not only by selling off the family silver, another of our assets, but by failing to get proper value for the taxpayers' stake in Eurostar. It's a question of competence; and this government is coming up short.'

Enormous new bills

Mick Whelan told the South & Eastern Region of the TUC, meeting at Congress House in central London, how trade unions will be brutally hit by enormous new bills because of the Tory government's anti-Trade Union Bill. He said: 'It's a variant of the Gulliver concept. That's how the chairman of the National Coal Board described the Thatcher government's legal strategy during the miners' strike

of 1984-85. It was designed, he said, to encourage multiple legal actions, each one "tying another tiny legal rope around the union until it woke one day and couldn't move." That's what the Tories are trying to do to us. Tie us up in as much red tape as possible and waste our members' money. We represent ordinary, decent, hard-working men and women, doing a safety-critical job to ensure passengers



Mick speaks out at SERTUC

get the first class public transport service they deserve, and this Bill is designed to make things worse for every one of us.'

QUOTE...

'If Lord Watts, some kind of newly ennobled party apparatchik, thinks £1 million buys a mansion in Islington, he wants reminding to take his meds.' – **Matthew Norman** in *The Independent*

...UNQUOTE

Sadiq Khan promises to be a collective bargaining mayor

Sadiq Khan is to promote workers' rights and trade union membership if he becomes Mayor of London on 5 May. Sadiq has pledged to be a 'collective bargaining mayor,' to set up a team at City Hall to work with us for employees and to promote union membership. A spokesman said: 'The Tories are against tackling discrimination and inequality in the workplace. Sadiq's low pay unit will focus on tackling low pay and in-work poverty.'

TOSH 'N' DAVE

Tosh McDonald, EC member for District 4, and Dave Calfe, EC member for District 6, have been re-elected president, and vice-president, respectively of ASLEF's executive committee.

SOUTHERN CROSS

Chuka Umunna, Labour MP for Streatham, described a meeting with rail bosses to discuss the poor performance of the privatised train operating company Southern as 'extremely disappointing.' Chuka said Govia Thameslink Railway executives only offered 'yet more excuses' and 'promises that have already been broken.' GTR, somewhat optimistically, described the meeting as 'challenging but constructive' but Claire Perry, Rail Minister and Conservative MP for Devizes, agreed with Chuka: 'It's inexcusable that customers aren't receiving the service they deserve.'

PASSENGER DELAYS

Which?, the consumer watchdog, has launched a campaign to make it easier for passengers to claim compensation from train companies for delays and cancellations. 'We made a super complaint in December calling on the ORR to make it easier for passengers to get compensation if their train is delayed or cancelled,' said *Which?* editor Richard Headland. 'Since then more than 39,000 people have signed up to our campaign Make Rail Refunds Easier.' *Which?* reveals that only one in three passengers who are entitled to compensation make a claim because the TOCs make the process so complicated. 'We want clear information on how to get a refund, with train companies offering cash as the first option, and to be held to account if they fail to encourage passengers to claim refunds.'



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Getting to grips with the Corbyn revolution



The days when every national newspaper had two or even three industrial correspondents have gone. That's why, as **CONRAD**

LANDIN, industrial reporter of the *Morning Star*, explains, the Corbyn revolution, putting trade unions and Labour Party activists back at the heart of the political process, has left many Fleet Street papers floundering

FOR a profession always up for confrontation, journalists can be mightily thin-skinned. When Jeremy Corbyn addressed the Labour Party conference last autumn, he had already faced two weeks of savaging from Fleet Street. And he had clearly noticed. Noting that one newspaper had attacked him for having an ancestor who ran a workhouse, he apologised for 'not doing the decent thing' and going back in time to chastise him. Pretty good going from a man who had been lampooned all summer as a humourless Puritan?

But, in the press area, where I was sitting, correspondents sighed heavily and tut-tutted. The woman to my left hastily tweeted that Corbyn was 'attacking the media again.'

Yes, many of the MPs now on Labour's front bench have had to learn about media strategy pretty sharpish. Their advisers were not used to the demands of a 24-hour news cycle. They did not give out speeches in advance during the first few weeks – as is the general practice. But it was not simply a matter of settling in. Corbyn's regime wanted to do politics differently – and it's safe to say this didn't best please the band of elite political reporters known in Westminster as the lobby.

NEW LABOUR AGENDA

Truth be told, political reporting is easy when you're dealing with certainties. And if there was one certainty in the Labour Party over the past two decades, it was that spontaneity was off the New Labour agenda. When Labour Party conference delegates voted to renationalise Royal Mail in 2013, Chuka Umunna immediately briefed journalists that the leadership would ignore this mandate. The same happened with rail – bringing the railways back into public ownership, a popular policy even with Conservative voters – and the state pension earnings link under the New Labour project of Tony Blair, Gordon Brown and Peter Mandelson.

When votes become meaningless, it's no surprise that journalists start ignoring them. In 2014, a rowdy conference floor rebellion went



Jeremy Corbyn addresses the Labour Party conference (above), attends a rally with voters (top), with GS Mick Whelan (top right), and the media response



by unnoticed. Getting stories from keynote speeches – fully briefed in advance, of course – is duller, but certainly much easier.

COMMAND AND CONTROL

Yet after the wave of grassroots optimism that swept Jeremy Corbyn to victory, it was clear the days of command and control were over. There was no question of the leadership ignoring conference mandates. And there was a new significance for trade union policy making, too. Labour's affiliates would no longer be treated like 'embarrassing elderly relatives', as TUC general secretary John Monks once complained.

Labour Party and trade union structures are not easy to understand. Yet it has still been a surprise to see journalists from an assortment of liberal and right-wing newspapers turn to me since Corbyn's victory for help in understanding the way the party, and the unions, work.

Perhaps it shouldn't be. Every newspaper once employed several industrial and labour correspondents, who made it their business to understand these sometimes arcane goings-on. But these days I am one of just three industrial correspondents in the print media.

Sadly, political reporters have proved themselves unable to understand the movement politics now consuming Labour. Newspapers repeatedly claim Trident replacement was discussed, or even approved, at last year's Labour Party conference. MPs such as Alison McGovern have said much the same in broadcast interviews – and gone unchallenged. Trident was, in fact, simply not prioritised for debate by either the unions or constituency delegates.

In January it was reported that Labour MPs

had passed a motion to bar Steve Rotherham, MP for Liverpool Walton, and Corbyn's parliamentary private secretary, from the party's national executive committee – rectifying an ambiguity in the Parliamentary Labour Party's standing orders. No-one picked up on how the Labour rule book says such disputes of interpretation should be dealt with by the party executive, not by votes of MPs. But out-of-depth reporters relied on the version briefed to them by the plotters from the Progress wing of the party who, of course, wanted this vote to be seen as a fatal blow to the new leader.

IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH

Now our newspapers are so interested in the workings of the labour movement you'd think they'd want their reporters to get their heads around the way it works. Relying on insiders to speak in certain terms is useless when decisions are made democratically. You'd think any journalist who clung to the old ways would soon fall behind.

But the notion that power could be in the hands of a trade unionist on a committee, let alone lay delegates at a conference, is alien to many in the media establishment. With our national news agenda so dominated by the City, Westminster politics and showbiz, precious little journalism involves talking to ordinary people, let alone representing their views in print, on radio, on screen or online.

A media that fails to understand the labour movement and, more importantly, cannot appreciate its democratic potential can only portray it as a confusing, threatening rabble. But those determined to see Jeremy Corbyn fail could do a lot worse than this. Ignorance, as they say, is strength.

Building a better railway – and a better Wales



First Minister of Wales
CARWYN JONES reflects on the part the railway has played in the industrial history of Wales and explains why a vote for Labour on 5 May will help the railway play a vital part in the future of the country, too

RAIL has been a huge part of our industrial and social history in Wales. Robert Trevithick built the first steam railway line in the world at Merthyr. The world's first fare-paying passenger railway was operated in Swansea. The historic Taff Vale railway dispute, which led to legislation to protect trade union rights, and was an important factor in the formation of the Labour Party, took place in South Wales.

Now Welsh Labour is determined to make sure that rail is a vital part of our future, as well as of our past.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

Despite the impact of Tory spending cuts over the past five years, we have continued to invest in improvements to rail services. Our programme has included extending the Ebbw Valley service to Ebbw Vale town centre, strengthening services on the Cambrian and Heart of Wales lines, upgrading the network in north-east Wales, and funding a scoping study on reopening the Carmarthen to Aberystwyth line.

Working in partnership with train operators and the rail unions, we have seen rail passenger journeys in Wales increase substantially over the past ten years. An efficient, effective rail network has a key role to play in supporting the Welsh economy, enabling access across Wales and cross-border for people and freight. It also enables people to access key services, enjoy leisure activities and links communities across Wales.

But we recognise that more needs to be done to improve the quality and efficiency of our rail network. That is why we sought and reached agreement with the UK government for the responsibility for awarding the Wales and Borders rail franchise to be transferred to Wales next year.

NOT FOR DIVIDEND MODEL

For the first time decisions about our railway services will be taken in Wales to ensure we have the high quality, effective, and affordable service we need. I am expecting real benefits to passengers, including faster journey times, higher quality services, improved reliability and less overcrowding. Our vision is to see a



Men of Harlech: Carwyn Jones (top) says a vote for Labour in elections for the National Assembly for Wales (above right) will not only build on the achievements of railway pioneers such as Robert Trevithick (above left) but help build a better country, too

not for dividend model with a strong connection with the communities it serves.

Transport for Wales, our not for dividend company, will deliver the new franchise as a modern high quality service, contributing to an integrated public transport system across Wales.

We have also reached agreement with the UK government for the electrification of the London to South Wales main line, and the Valleys lines, though we were extremely concerned by the delay recently announced in completing the Cardiff to Swansea section of the route. In North Wales, we are working with partners to build the case for the electrification

“ WE HAVE SEEN RAIL PASSENGER JOURNEYS IN WALES INCREASE SUBSTANTIALLY OVER THE PAST TEN YEARS ”

of the North Wales main line.

We have also set out an ambitious plan for a transformative integrated transport system in south-east Wales, the Metro. The Metro is more than just a transport project, it will be a catalyst for transforming the economic and social prospects of south-east Wales, and the country as a whole.

We will continue to urge the UK government to deliver investment in the rail network in Wales, and to press for the devolution of powers in relation to railway infrastructure.

If we are to see this exciting agenda for the rail industry in Wales progress, we need a Welsh Labour government to take it forward. The Welsh Conservatives have opposed our plans for a not for dividend model for the next

franchise. They have previously set out plans for a 30% cut in spending in the economy and transport budget, which could have a damaging impact on investment in the network. Meanwhile, the Tories at Westminster have failed to deliver electrification on the timetable they set out.

TEAM WALES APPROACH

Despite the Tory cuts from Westminster, Welsh Labour is delivering for Wales. 15,000 young people have found work through Jobs Growth Wales. Pupils in Wales have achieved their best ever GCSE results – and we have protected schools spending from Tory cuts.

We are giving families and pensioners in Wales a helping hand, through initiatives such as free prescriptions, free school breakfasts and free bus passes. We have seen record inward investment in Wales by business, and achieved the joint largest rate of decrease in unemployment of anywhere in the UK. In Wales, we have long taken a Team Wales approach – working together for more jobs, for better jobs, and for a better Wales.

If we are to continue this successful partnership approach, we need a Welsh Labour victory in the elections for the National Assembly for Wales on Thursday 5 May.

● Carwyn Jones was born in Swansea in 1967 and brought up in a Welsh-speaking family in Bridgend. He was educated at Brynteg comprehensive school and the University of Wales, Aberystwyth. He was a barrister at Gower Chambers, Swansea, and a tutor at Cardiff University law school before he was elected Welsh Assembly Member for Bridgend in 1999. He succeeded Rhodri Morgan as leader of Welsh Labour in 2009.

Rail freight hit by Tories' moves on coal and steel



District 7 Organiser
BRIAN CORBETT
reports on the state of
the railway in Wales

AS THE *Journal* goes to press our freight drivers find that they are in a very vulnerable position with the loss of coal and the major loss of jobs in the steel industry. The three main freight depots in Wales, together with the knock-on effect at the two smaller depots across the border, may be severe and hit our members very hard. A number of members have already decided to take VRS; this may help those who are left in our industry.

The Conservative government at Westminster has done nothing to assist the steel and coal industry in northern England, so I would expect little or no help in Wales. Good old free enterprise at its worst! Whilst the low quality steel from abroad is subsidised by their governments, and is cheap at present, once it becomes the main supplier, they will then have the monopoly and we all know what that means...

As the freight is purely privatised, if a company goes bust or pulls out of moving freight by rail, that is it for the workforce – unemployment – unlike the passenger companies, where they simply get re-branded, with a different colour uniform and the trains are repainted a new colour.

All the forecasts for the long term suggest that major increases in rail freight traffic will take place, but with no drivers to move it, this is throwing the long-term planning into chaos unless some form of unified approach by all the parties involved takes place.

The electrification of the Severn tunnel will be taking place in the next few years, but as part of the project it is vital that the gauge improvements also take place at the same time, otherwise the funding will have to be vastly increased (at present, the funding has been withdrawn) and no doubt this will cause delays. It should be remembered that the tunnel is the primary freight route into Wales and should be given equal status.

On the positive side, passenger growth continues, both in North and South Wales, in the last ten years by 46%. The projected figures on the Valley lines is for a 76% increase in passenger numbers and on the Ebbw Vale line by 112% by 2023.

The funding differences between the Welsh government in Cardiff and the UK government at Westminster have now been settled for the electrification programme, for the main line to



Trams, trains and



ANDY HUDD, executive
committee member for
District 7, reports on the
future for rails in Wales

Cardiff and then on to Swansea, and also for the Valley lines.

The Welsh government here continues to be very positive in all areas of transport and has made a number of proposals in North Wales; unfortunately the infrastructure costs are the main problem. But they have now funded two feasibility studies to look at opening, in the long term, the Aberystwyth to Carmarthen line and the branch line to Abertillery from the Ebbw Vale line. Also, just a few months ago, the extension was opened from Ebbw Vale to the town which has proved very popular.

On the down side, the electrification works programme has been pushed further back, and this has affected GWR, and the introduction of the new IEP trains and, when you look at the sidings already finished at Swansea, it's fair to say that it has been a total planning failure by those involved in the infrastructure work.

On the political side, ASLEF continues to have strong support from members of the National Assembly for Wales, in particular Julie James, the Assembly Member for Swansea West, and Jo Stevens, the MP for Cardiff Central, and I would like on behalf of all our members to thank them for all their efforts in supporting the rail industry here in Wales.

THERE are big plans and big ideas for Wales! The Welsh Assembly government has indicated that it expects to become a franchising authority, with the power to award the next Wales and Borders franchise, which will become available in October 2018. The Welsh government has also announced the establishment of Transport for Wales, a not for dividend company that will deliver the next Wales and Borders franchise.

A recent consultation document explains that the Welsh government wants to modernise the Wales and Borders network with plans to introduce a Wales Metro service that could see trams replacing heavy rail in places in an attempt to improve the frequency of several Valley lines by 2023. This will be on the back of the (delayed) electrification plans which will eventually service the main line route to Swansea



and big ideas

from Paddington by 2018.

On a recent break to Geneva I witnessed a fine example of an integrated transport system that connected heavy rail, light rail and buses which, on arriving at the airport, provided free travel to the city centre (10 minutes away). The use of electrification made the city's air seem fresh and supplied a clean (and quiet) energy source to the regular-as-clockwork transport system (which includes electric buses!) If the Metro (and electrification) can deliver this to Wales then I am all for it – but I do have some reservations.

The Welsh government recently fought tooth and nail to get £125m cash from central government with the caveat that it has to spend at least £325m on electrification otherwise this would be reduced proportionately. The Welsh government is also looking to secure funding from the European Union as well as using a large proportion of its capital budget for the project. Depending on the outcome of market testing the cost of the whole project could be £2bn, and I think this, along with the use of the private sector for procurement, just seems like

there are too many elements that undermine the project. My other concern is that if trams do replace trains in some areas then this may threaten the jobs, pay, terms and conditions of our members.

The improvements that are being considered are long overdue and the Welsh public have been crying out for a modern, efficient, and more frequent transport system for years and I hope that this project brings these changes but the use of private financing for procurement will bring a long term financial burden that could have been avoided if a fully publicly-owned Wales and Borders franchise could have been realised.

We should consider the issue of trams replacing heavy rail very carefully. With the Sheffield tram-train pilot scheme and Wales Metro there is a definite movement within the industry and this could pose some awkward organisational questions for our trade union in the years ahead. I'm sure we will rise to the challenge, when the time comes, but there can be no harm in considering the possible issues ahead of time. For the moment, though, let's enjoy the investment the Welsh government is proposing – after all, it's been long overdue!

ASLEF and Labour on the right lines

STEVE WILLIAMS of Swansea High Street branch reports on a fundraiser for Julie James in Swansea West



Julie on her new street stand, sponsored by ASLEF

It was a great pleasure to attend the Swansea West CLP annual dinner and fundraiser for Assembly Member Julie James on 23 January at the Marriott Hotel. Our general secretary, Mick Whelan, was the guest speaker, and Dawn Primarolo, who was MP for Bristol South from 1987 to 2015, was also speaking.

ASLEF, as usual, was supportive of the event and in attendance was District Organiser Brian Corbett and his wife Bev, along with Brian Jones and me, both ex-Swansea DDC reps, with our partners. Jo Stevens, Labour MP for Cardiff Central, who also has strong ties with ASLEF, was also there.

Mick made, as always, an excellent speech, covering a wide range of subjects, including the loss of 750 Tata steel jobs in Margam, only 15 miles away, and the knock-on effect to local communities and service industries, including rail freight. He also covered the major delays in the South Wales main line through to Swansea, originally planned for full service of December 2018, now delayed by 18 to 24 months; there must be a few costly delay minutes there, I think!

Mick went on to wish Julie every success in the Assembly election on 5 May, and talked of the importance of returning a Labour government to Cardiff Bay. Julie responded by thanking Mick for the effort ASLEF has made towards her campaign. The fight will not be easy in Swansea West, with areas of deprivation, and an increase in the UKIP vote at the last general election.

Mick, Brian and Julie then unveiled her new street stand which has been sponsored by ASLEF. The evening raised over £2,500 towards Julie's campaign with the tickets, raffle and auction.

ASLEF and Swansea West have always had strong connections. Before Julie was elected in 2011, Andrew Davies held the seat from the start of the Assembly in 1999. He was Economic Development & Transport Minister and held regular quarterly meetings with ASLEF and other rail unions so we had direct access to the minister. I know Edwina Hart has carried on this tradition of direct access by rail unions and these sort of links will be very important in the run up to the 2018 franchise renewal in Wales and deciding what sort of railway we want here.

Myth of the market



The triumph of the free market, like the *Triumph of the Will*, is often asserted but has failed to be proved. GREGOR GALL takes issue with the mantra of the market

WHETHER it's the collapse of the steel industry, the maintenance of privatised railways, the proposal to privatise Channel 4 or the continued 'light touch' regulation of the banking system, in Britain, as elsewhere, the free market continues to rule supreme.

It is seen as the most rational and efficient method for aligning supply with demand, and vice versa, for goods and services. Prices reflect scarcity, and the balance of supply and demand, and only in a free market will individuals take the risks to create – and invest in – goods and services because their reward is private benefit, namely, profit.

IDEOLOGICAL GRIP

It is not just the *Spectator* and *Economist*, the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Telegraph* and the Conservative Party which say the market is the most rational and efficient method of organising an economy. Large swathes of businesses, the media and many political parties say so, too. The ideological hold of the market – of neo-liberalism – is tight. In fact, neo-liberalism has become the 'common sense' of our age.

You know how tight the grip is when two things occur. One is when the solution proffered after market failure is not regulation but further deregulation! The other is when the state steps in to bail out companies after – as there frequently is in market economies – a failure of the market. We have seen both in Britain since 2008.

But if the free market is such an effective way of running an economy, how come it needs state support and does not work?

A free market needs some form of regulation to govern the relationships between units of capital (employers and shareholders) and between capital and labour (specifically to stop labour stealing from capital

through creating property laws). But, above and beyond this, there is a vast array of ways in which capital gets the state to protect and advance its interests.

These range from special relationships with certain foreign governments – and foreign wars – to protect markets and sources of raw materials – such as oil – trade delegations to foreign countries headed by the Prime Minister or members of the royal family, and hidden subsidies like lawful tax avoidance and the subsidisation of low pay through devices such as working family tax credits. On top of this, many businesses depend on state expenditure for their profits – particularly those in the defence sector – as well as all those private contractors plundering the public purse with contracts in the public sector.

Relying on the state in this way, for capital, is not incompatible with pushing for less state regulation of their activities in order to decrease their costs and increase their profits. Hence, these firms – and their chums in Parliament – argue for reductions in health and safety regulation, fewer legal obligations to consumers, fewer rights for workers and more regulation of trade unions.

HOUSE OF CARDS

So the free market and its players need the state to help prop them up. But, even with that help, the market still does not work. One historical tendency is for the big players to get ever bigger. Another is the depressing cycle of booms and slumps. Together, they make a deadly cocktail whereby the slumps get more frequent and ever more serious.

So the tendency is for the most profitable companies to buy out their competitors, reducing the level of competition and allowing price fixing. When boom turns to bust, and the economy, based on a few big players, collapses like a



house of cards, far more misery is caused than when an economy based on a much larger number of smaller players gets into trouble.

Slumps follow booms because, as the economy grows, there is increasing demand for raw materials, labour, goods and services and prices rise. At some point rising prices make employers take fright because they can't pass on the increases to their customers. Consequently, they cut back on investment, and spending, deflating the economy as there is falling demand for raw materials, labour, goods and services. And when this happens the bigger, stronger, players buy out their weaker competitors.

Although the market periodically wreaks havoc and misery on the majority of society – the 'little people' in the words of big business – every slump is followed by a boom so it's 'even Stevens.' Except that inequality in wealth and power exist, and keep growing ever greater, while the environment is continually degraded, heading towards the point of systemic collapse.

It's not hard to work out who is best served by the view that the free market is the most rational and efficient method of organising our economy and society.

With material wealth comes political power, and political power is used to extend and protect what Joseph Conrad, in

Jeremy Corbyn (above, with the ASLEF crew at the Labour Party conference in Brighton last year) doesn't believe the market has all of the answers; a point made by Joseph Conrad in his attack on material interests in *Nostromo* (filmed with Colin Firth as the silver mine owner)

Nostromo, calls 'material interests.' Most countries have a 'free press.' What this means, in the real world, is that anyone is free to run a newspaper so long as, like Rupert Murdoch, they have enough money. Once the tiny wealthy minority – the 1% at the top of the tree – have exercised this ability, of course they use it to promote their own interests and those of neo-liberalism.

Neo-liberalism does not have its own way completely. Many trade unions refuse to accept this logic and the election of Jeremy Corbyn as Labour Party leader provides the opportunity to make big advances against this lazy, and misguided, *canard* of our age. The fight is on and ASLEF and its members can play an important part in the battle.

Gregor Gall is Professor of Industrial Relations at the University of Bradford, Visiting Lecturer in International Labour and Trade Union Studies at Ruskin College, Oxford, and a visiting lecturer at the University of Hertfordshire

Proud history of public service

John McCree Scott, a driver with VTEC, was awarded the MBE in the New Year honours list for services to the administration of justice and the railway community. He takes KEITH RICHMOND on a guided tour of Grainger Town, the historic Georgian heart of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and talks about life on the bench and his passion for Northumbria

ASLEF members have a long, proud and honourable tradition of public service. The Tories – and their pals at the *Daily Telegraph* and *Daily Mail* – would have you believe that trade union members are only in it for themselves. Nothing could be further from the truth. Members of this trade union originally banded together in 1880 – in unity is strength – for protection from employers, like the Great Western Railway, who had increased the working day for engine drivers and firemen from 10 to 12 hours while slashing their wages. But, over the last 126 years, members of this small craft union have made an enormous contribution to public life, giving up their spare time to work as councillors, magistrates, school governors, prison visitors and members of health authorities.

The civic work of one of our members was recognized at the beginning of this year when John McCree Scott was made a Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire for services to the administration of justice and the railway community.

PROUD HISTORY

John, who lives in Cleadon, the village just outside Sunderland where he was born in 1960, has been a train driver for 38 years – for British Rail, GNER, National Express and, now, Virgin Trains East Coast – taking passengers from Newcastle Central to King's Cross and Edinburgh.

In 1984 he was instrumental in setting up the North Eastern Railway Staff Welfare Association, which provides funds for retirement presentations, summer outings and a panto treat at Christmas for the children of railway workers in all grades.

In 1988 he became the youngest ever Justice of the Peace on the Sunderland bench, and since then has been chair of the probation committee, chair of the training committee, chair of the City of Sunderland youth panel, and secretary of the north-east branch of the Magistrates' Association. At the start of this year, showing the esteem in which he is held, he was appointed chair of the new South Northumbria bench of 250 magistrates after the merger of South Tyneside, Gateshead and Sunderland benches.



'Railwaymen have a proud history of public service,' says John. 'One of my fellow train drivers is a serving magistrate on the City of Newcastle bench and, during my time working for the railways, seven Lord Mayors of Newcastle have been railwaymen and councillors. The MBE is a great honour, not only for me, but for my fellow magistrates, who are the unsung heroes of the criminal justice system, and who, as a body of unpaid volunteers, have been serving this country selflessly since 1361.'

John wanted to leave school after O-levels and join the railway, but his mum, who ran a pub, while his dad was in the RAF, encouraged him to stay on 'in case you don't get a job with British Rail.' So after studying for A-levels in English, History and Geography – still three of his passions – he joined the railway in 1978. 'It was nine years after the end of steam, but still a steam-structured railway. I worked with drivers who had stood on the footplate of *Mallard* and the *Flying Scotsman* and shovelled coal.' He joined the union straight away – 'No matter where you are, or who you work for, you always need a safety net' – was on the branch committee during the 1982 strike, secretary of the hardship fund, and became chair of ASLEF's Gateshead & Newcastle branch.

STEPHENSON'S ROCKET

'I was very active in the union for a number of years and I'm grateful to the union for giving me the confidence to apply to become a magistrate – especially at the tender age of 28. The union gave me the self-belief you need to put yourself forward to represent people, and the assurance you need to speak out about what you believe.'

Though he dryly adds: 'I got more respect



John in court (left); in front of Castle Keep, built by Henry II to protect England from the Scots (far left); at George Stephenson's stone cottage in Wylam (above left); in front of the High Level Bridge, the world's first rail-road bridge, built by Robert Stephenson in 1849 (above); which is featured on the branch banner carried here at the Durham Miners' Gala

from magistrates for being the driver of a high speed train than from rail managers for being a magistrate!

The iron road, though, runs deep in John's blood; he's a descendant of Robert McCree, the fireman on Stephenson's *Rocket* during the Rainhill trials in 1829 to find a locomotive for the Liverpool & Manchester Railway.

And he loves the north-east, but not the sometimes bitter rivalry between Newcastle and Sunderland – 'two great cities, they complement each other' – because he is passionately proud of the whole of Northumbria. 'There were seven kingdoms in Anglo-Saxon England – East Anglia, Essex, Wessex, Sussex, Kent, Mercia, and Northumbria, which, at its height, extended from Sheffield to Edinburgh, and from the Humber to the Mersey. I love history and I love this part of the world.'

DISPENSING JUSTICE

'I was born between St Peter's and St Paul's monasteries, 14 miles from Durham Cathedral, where St Cuthbert is buried. All these centres of early Christianity. To understand where you're going, you have to understand your past, and I think it helps you understand other people.'

John is a royalist – 'I've seen the alternatives, the way other countries work, and I think it's good to have a head of state who is above politics' – and conscious both of the oath of allegiance he swears to the monarch, and the judicial oath 'that I will do right to all manner of people without fear or favour, affection or ill will'.

'It's about dispensing justice. Your first thoughts are for the victim of the crime but, when it's a trial, then everybody, including the defendant, is entitled to a fair hearing, irrespective of gender, creed, sexuality or whatever. And I think it's important that your guilt or innocence is decided by lay people, ordinary citizens, not professionals, not detached from the community. That's been the tradition in this country for hundreds of years.'

Shipshape and Bristol fashion

THE October meeting of Bristol branch was a special occasion as a number of members were presented with long service badges and retirement certificates. Normal branch business was dealt with the previous day so the presentations could take place without delay. GS Mick Whelan, DO7 Brian Corbett and EC member Andrew Hudd were all in attendance; the national organiser was unable to attend as he was out of the country on ASLEF business.

Before the presentations took place the general secretary gave a state of the nation speech which went down very well. Mick talked about many topics including new technology, de-skilling, attacks on the Railway Pension Scheme, electrification on the Great Western main line

and ASLEF's opposition to any extension of DOO or DCO. He covered many of the modern challenges train drivers face today and concluded by stressing how important celebrations of long service awards are!

The GS then presented badges to Paul Byrne (10 years); Bob Russam (15); Roy Bishop, Mark Cook, Neil Leach (25); Jack Jennings, Keith Malin, Bob Archibald, Steve Spiteri, Peter Chapman (30) and, although he was unable to attend, made special mention of Russel Dare (40). Roger Thomas received his ASLEF retirement certificate.

Another 37 members chose a less formal presentation at their depot. I would like to thank everyone who attended and contributed to such a memorable night!

Bernard Kennedy, branch secretary



1,085 years' service to ASLEF celebrated in Bristol



A presentation was made to Alan Puncheon, who has been medically retired, by EC8 Terry Wilkinson. Alan was senior ASLEF rep at Transplant for a number of years and always gave 100% commitment. On behalf of our members I would like to wish him all the best for the future.
Steve Walker

Upcoming events

● EASTLEIGH – SATURDAY 12 MARCH

Annual reunion from 12.0 to 18.00 at the Railway Institute, 2 Romsey Road, Eastleigh, Hampshire, SO50 9FE.

● CRICKLEWOOD – FRIDAY 18 MARCH

From 12.0 at the RAFA club, Ashburnham Road, Bedford.

● RAMSGATE – THURSDAY 7 APRIL

Southeastern retired and working members' reunion from 11.0 at the Red Arrow Club, Newington Road, Ramsgate.

● NORWICH – FRIDAY 15 APRIL

Reunion from 19.00 at Arkwrights social club, Hobart Square, Norwich. Details from Chris Pearson (07776 123206).

● STONEBRIDGE PARK – SATURDAY 16 APRIL

The Big 50! Annual reunion and 50th anniversary from 14.00 at the Skinners Arms, 114 Judd St, London, WC1.

● DIDCOT – SATURDAY 30 APRIL

Didcot celebrates its Big 50 from 12.0 at the Didcot staff club. Past, present and associate members all welcome.

● STRATFORD – SATURDAY 30 APRIL

Annual reunion from 17.00 at the Railway Tavern Hotel, 131 Angel Lane, Stratford, E15. All welcome.

● Please send your all branch news, reports and photographs to journal@aslef.org.uk

100 not out

National Organiser Simon Weller made a visit to the January meeting of Doncaster branch, initially to respond to a branch resolution requesting that consideration be given to the introduction of a 32 hour week at DB Schenker in an effort to reduce the number of redundancies required by the company. Whilst agreeing with the general thrust of the res, Simon highlighted practical problems in the freight sector and his points were accepted by members.

Simon reported on the Trade Union Bill passing through Parliament, and the restrictions this will place on a union's ability to

represent its members. It is, he said, an attack on democracy, coupled with planned changes to political party funding, proposed boundary changes, and a reduction in the number of MPs. He also reported on changes to the Railway Pension Scheme after the introduction of the single tier state pension.

DBS company council chair Nigel Roebuck reported on the EJRA ballot and urged members to support the reintroduction of a set retirement age. The branch also took this opportunity to present 50 year medallions to John Armstrong and Trevor Holden and Simon was delighted to make the presentations to these two stalwart ASLEF members.

K Beresford, Doncaster



Trevor Holden, receiving his medallion from national organiser Simon Weller, and John Armstrong (far right)

We're all in this together

I'D LIKE to thank Plymouth branch for holding an open meeting in late January for all drivers in the south-west. In attendance were NO Simon Weller, DO7 Brian Corbett and EC7 Andy Hudd. The government's continuing attack on British workers was the main discussion, with the NO talking about the Trade Union Bill, changes to the state pension and the decline of the freight sector. All three are very important, but it's the last that is the biggest concern; something which all FOC drivers from Scotland to Cornwall comprehend and one which all TOC drivers need to understand, too. That's why Exeter branch has sent an emergency motion to head office.

David Cameron says the Conservatives are the party of the hard-working British taxpayer. Tell that to our colleagues in the freight sector who worry how much longer they will be working hard. As a TOC driver, I am well protected under existing procedures. Company ownership may change and a new uniform be handed out but, in most cases, it's an unobtrusive, seamless and painless task.

Not so in the freight sector. I speak to colleagues on FOCs and, although I don't understand all the issues, I understand enough about the dire situation they are working under. This message has been explained in the *Journal* by the NO and DO5 Nigel Gibson, but our premonitions are now turning into nightmares. As I write, I receive news from a DBS driver that SSE looks set to shut three of its four units at Fiddler's Ferry power station between Warrington and Widnes. This will affect DBS employees based at Warrington depot, including 60 drivers. Three power stations will close in the next two months: Ferrybridge C and Eggborough are the others.

As TOC drivers, we need to put ourselves in a freight driver's shoes. I hear horror stories of DOO, zero hours contracts, spare turns with eight hour movements, van driving, remote booking on, loco fueling, short notice of turns and duties. These conditions could eventually cascade from FOCs to TOCs because the TOCs would love to try and impose some, or all, in our t&cs.

As well as the massive loss of work nationwide caused by this Tory government there is also the advent of 'rent a train driver' agencies like the Rail Operations Group, which has our details via the EU train driver licence. Retired drivers, heritage and private railway drivers, drivers on retainers (waiting at home for the phone to ring), are all out there, with hardly any regulation, and which Colas and West Coast Railways like to 'employ'. Don't think they just do freight or charter work; TOCs use them to move stock around the country, movements that should be done in house or by reputable FOCs, not by the cheapest bidder. Would you want your grandad of 78 getting in the front of a 95mph loco coupled up to a full HST set and having to deal with TPWS, GSM-R, AWS, etc? These companies are parasites.

As a proactive union, we need to rally together to ensure that if, or when, redundancies occur, ASLEF can help to relocate the displaced to employment in TOCs around the country. It should be a priority to ensure redundant or displaced drivers keep their key and are retained in the industry.

This is a difficult battle, and will need all the persuasive power at our disposal, but if we do the right thing now across all companies, ASLEF members will look back and be proud we helped look after each other; the true meaning of a trade union. Simon Weller said at the Plymouth branch meeting, 'This is the biggest test for ASLEF since the end of steam! It's that serious!' So, let's take another of those empty Tory slogans and adopt it: We're all in this together.

Ryan Howe, Exeter branch

Badges and beer in Buxton

The GS, Mick Whelan, and EC3 Andy Hourigan made a welcome return to Buxton & Peak Forest in December. Mick updated members on a great number of things including the TU Bill, political fund, Night Tube, growing ASLEF membership and our finances. Andy gave us the latest news from district council including disputes on Arriva Trains and Northern Rail, and the need to



Badges (and beer) for Adrian, James and John

be careful what we put on Facebook. Badges were presented to John Fitzgerald (45 years), James Glew (10) and Adrian Davies (retired member). **Paul Costello, branch secretary**



Mick Holder turns back time to March 1916

The editor of the *Locomotive Journal* on record income for the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers & Firemen and the struggles to come

TRULY MARVELLOUS PROGRESS

The editor reports: 'Total income of the Society during 1915, apart from the insurance section, was upwards of £43,000, which is not only a record, but, considering the fact that over 2,000 of our members are with the colours and paying no contributions, can safely be termed truly marvellous progress, and we doubt if any union in the country can show better results. We have been able to add nearly £12,400 to funds during the year, which establishes another record, and strengthens our sinews of war for the trade union struggles which will follow the world war.'

OVER THE TOP OF THE PARAPET

Southall branch regrets to announce 'the death of one of our cleaner members, Brother EW Osborn, who was killed in France on 9 January. Our brother joined the 11th West Yorkshires in September 1914 and proceeded to France with his battalion in August last year. On the morning of his death he was engaged in sniping over the top of the parapet of a trench when he was shot through the head by an enemy sniper.'

A GOOD MEAT TEA FOR 70

Derby branch reports: 'A whist drive, organised by the Women's Guild of the branch, was held in the Unity Hall, Derby, in aid of wounded soldiers in the Derbyshire Royal Infirmary. It resulted in a great success, providing 70 wounded soldiers with a good meat tea during Christmas week.' But Birmingham No 1 branch reports: 'The war has been responsible for taking some of our members away into the army, and also into the munition works here, where better wages can be obtained than working on the railway.'

WORDS OF SYMPATHY

Beatrice Osborn writes: 'I thank you for the very prompt manner in which the death claim re my son, who was killed in France, was met and I fully appreciate the words of sympathy from your general office and your branch. Again, thanking you and wishing your Society every success.'

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Saturday 30th April 2016



- 11.45** Starting Rally
- 12.15** May Day march - bring union banners
- 13.00 - 17.00** Indoors at the Mechanics Institute and outdoors at Sackville Gardens - a day of events, discussion, stalls, exhibitions, film showings, music and entertainment
 - looking back at our history including the history of trade unionism in Manchester and the Spanish Civil War.
 - planning how we stand up for our planet, our NHS and our rights at work today.
 - making links with trade unionists from around the world, including Chicago, Ireland, Palestine and Latin America.

The Real Junk Food Project will provide pay-as-you-feel food in Sackville Gardens and there will be tea and coffee and a licensed bar at the Mechanics.

- 17.30 - 19.00** May Day rally with confirmed speakers including Christine Blower (NUT), Lynn Collins (NWTUC), Arthur Scargill (NUM), Mark Serwotka (PCS), Hannah McCarthy (NUS) and Dave Ward (CWU).

- 20.00** MTUC and Banner Theatre present "Chicago the Great Teachers Strike".

All at the Mechanics Institute, 103 Princess Street, Manchester, M1 6DD

The birthplace of the TUC

MTUC and UoM Students Union present an evening of music.
Time and venue to be confirmed.



TREVOR KNOTT WESTERN MAN AND CHAMPION GOLFER

It is with great sadness that I have to report the sad loss of ex-Bath Road driver Trevor Knott who passed away on 25 November. He was almost 85.

Trevor was a Western man, starting his career at Yatton depot as a cleaner. He moved between Wells and Yatton as he gained promotion to fireman. When those depots closed in the 1960s he was promoted to driver and moved to Bath Road diesel depot where he

progressed up to the top links and retired in the early 1990s.

Trevor was an exceptionally talented golfer and could have easily turned professional as a young man. Instead he went on to become a very successful amateur, winning many trophies at local, county and national level. He also won the National Railway Championship in 1976. Trevor's name is on the wall all over Clevedon golf club, where he won the club championship

many times. He was also made an honorary life member, one of only five people to have this honour bestowed.

Trevor was very popular, as indicated by the large turnout of railway staff and golfing associates at his funeral where an excellent eulogy was given by his old golfing friend Dennis Longden. Trevor will be much missed by Simon, his son, also a driver with GWR at Bristol, his family, his friends and all his



Champion Trevor on the links
former work mates.
Bernard Kennedy, Bristol
branch secretary

JOHN EVANS NESSUN DORMA

My father, John Moor Evans, passed away on 11 January. He was 96. Jock retired from the railway many years ago but liked nothing more than a bit of banter with his old railway mates. He used to attend the King's Cross branch Hatfield reunions. I found in his pocket a few pictures from 2004 of Len Lacey and other gentlemen who served with my father with 192 Railway Operating Company, the Royal Engineers. The lads from Blaydon 52C and Gateshead 52A always asked for a song on the footplate. As an Italian interpreter during the second World War dad had a full repertoire, and his rendition of *Nessun Dorma* was sensational. On the evening he died he was listening to the Three Tenors, and singing along. When the track ended, and the applause started, he closed his eyes and passed away. So dad, a proud loco man and



Top quality: John (right) with Ray Jackson at one of our weekend schools

freeman of Berwick was, appropriately, shunted away on a wave of applause after singing with the Three Tenors. Incidentally, I should have been a driver but he said, 'No!'
Nigel Evans, Gateshead

DENNIS MORIARTY STEAM WORLD



Ex-Barrow Road and Bath Road driver Dennis Moriarty died at the beginning of October. He was 85. Dennis was a Midland man, starting his railway career after the Second World War at Barrow Road in Bristol. Like many footplate men of his generation he began as a cleaner before becoming a fireman.

Den was featured in *Steam World* in January 1996 in an article entitled The Talk of the Line: Barrow Road's Jubilees. It featured his experiences as fireman in the 1950s working on express turns like the *Devonian*. 'At 21 years of age Dennis Moriarty was exceptionally young for a fireman on a mileage turn such as this, and from 1951 put in a five year stint on Barrow Road's top link working with the *Devonian*.' Den goes on to reminisce about his old driver, Fred Barnett, who was a real gentleman and looked after his firemen. Den left Barrow Road in the early 1960s to become a driver at Bath Road diesel depot. He gained promotion through the links until he retired in the early 1990s in the top links, just before the depot split and privatisation. Den was a very popular character and will be much missed.

Bernard Kennedy, Bristol

GORDON BARGE BRUNEL PULLMAN

Gordon Barge, ex-Bath Road, passed away on 29 November. Gordon was a Western man, serving his early career as a cleaner and fireman at St Phillip's Marsh and Bath Road. He was eventually promoted to driver at Bath Road diesel depot where he worked until he retired in the early 1990s. Gordon returned to working

steam engines on the main line for a special occasion on 12 June 1983. He worked the *King George V* on the Brunel Pullman from Bristol to Newport. Gordon will be much missed by his family, Chris, Hazel and Heather as well as by all his friends and former work mates.
Bernard Kennedy, Bristol



Gordon working the King George V at Cattybrook

GRAHAM LISTER LOVED EVERY MINUTE



Graham (right) with Simon Coult

Graham Lister of Doncaster sadly passed away, on his birthday, 29 November 2015, at the age of 73, after a lifelong career on the railway. Graham joined the railway when he left school and he retired after 49 years and 11 months on the iron road, saying he had enjoyed every minute of it. He also loved holidays abroad and was a keen gardener. May he rest in peace.
Peter Smith, RMS reporter



We welcome letters, either by email to journal@aslef.org.uk or by Royal Mail to **ASLEF Journal at 77 St John Street, London, EC1M 4NN**. The writer of our **star letter** wins a rich range of ASLEF regalia.

Six days shall ye labour...

Over my 23 year career on the railways I've worked with Sundays outside, and inside, the working week. I started in 1992 as a conductor, with Sundays outside the working week, so that was a 40 hour week (average) Monday to Saturday, then every four weeks I had to work a Sunday (if cover wasn't available). Now as a driver I work a 35 hour week with Sundays inside the working week. As a conductor on a low wage the extra Sunday every fourth week came in handy but at a cost as, sometimes, that was a seven day week, so no time off, and of course there were slippy Sundays (extra Sundays). Again, the money was welcome but the lack of days off wasn't.

Now as a driver (since 2001) Sundays are inside the working week which means part of our 35 hour week and not extra overtime and an extra day off during the week. The extra pay we got for putting Sundays inside the week is now part of the salary we get, which means any overtime we work is a higher rate than if Sundays were outside the working week. Also all our pay is pensionable so, when we eventually retire, all our pay counts. And with Sundays inside the working week there need to be more drivers to cover these days so it creates jobs.

With Sundays outside the working week how can we achieve 156 rest days a year (a four day week) because all those Sundays will reduce the number of rest days? Support your EC to carry out the AAD 2015 recommendation to show the benefits of Sundays in the working week.

Adrian Lunn, Skipton

On the seventh ye shall rest

I want to express my absolute opposition to ASLEF's position on Sundays inside the working week as set out by Andy Hudd in the latest issue of the *Journal*. Andy states, 'I don't work Sundays... the only guaranteed days on which I will have the opportunity to catch up with those who are closest to me.' I couldn't agree more, so why do Andy and other senior officials see fit to inflict compulsory Sunday working on the membership?

The current arrangement of having Sundays outside the week means I've never worked a Sunday since I became a driver. No increase in salary could compensate for time lost with loved ones. It seems ASLEF is

DRIVER DID BRILLIANT JOB ON A VERY DIFFICULT DAY

I want to get a note of thanks to a train driver doing a brilliant job in difficult circumstances. I was on what was supposed to be the 8.08am Thameslink train from Catford to Luton on 21 January.

It was already delayed and the train before was too overcrowded for me, and a lot of fellow passengers, to join. After I got on it got increasingly busy and, at several stations, large groups of people were unable to get on.

Understandably, those on and off the train were frustrated but the driver explained calmly that in order to protect the safety of passengers, and because he couldn't see down the

length of the train, he would have to walk down the train making sure no one was stuck in the doors. He sympathised with passenger frustration but the mood in the carriages was understanding of the situation he was in.

With that many people cramped and late it must be difficult to explain you have to delay them further but he did it in a way that invited solidarity and not further frustration.

Thameslink provide an atrocious service to their customers but that is not the fault of their drivers and this one demonstrated why they are worth every penny that they're paid.

Will Hoyles, Lewisham

prepared to sacrifice existing members' work/life balance to recruit more members to cover the rest days that would be generated.

Matthew Danks

Sold down the river

I wish to register my disgust not only with ASLEF but with all the railway unions regarding the proposed ending of the final salary pension scheme.

I attended our branch meeting here at Manchester Piccadilly to listen to a briefing by our company council member and was left speechless at how all the unions have capitulated, signing away the future of their members' pensions, without a fight, or even gauging the opinions of union members.

The branch secretary informed us of a meeting he attended where Simon Weller, ASLEF's national organiser, spoke of the possibility of a national rail strike if this Tory government was to launch an attack on the Railway Pension Scheme. Well, Simon, we are under attack, and ASLEF has surrendered without a fight!

What I refuse to accept is that when ASLEF was approached by ATOC it did not immediately inform members and, more importantly, ask if we were prepared to strike to secure the future of our current pensions. I am now, more than ever, disillusioned with ASLEF and find myself considering whether to remain a member of this once proud trade union. Lions led by donkeys springs to mind!

Steve Hill, Manchester Piccadilly No1, TPE

Simon Weller says: 'All four unions agreed we faced two difficult choices: allow each company to use the statutory override

which the government has given them, and fight each TOC on a piecemeal basis, or come to a negotiated settlement applicable across all TOC sections. The latter course takes the statutory override away from the TOCs, which they could have applied every year until 2019. Had we gone for the piecemeal approach, and the industrial action that entailed, we would not have achieved a consistent resolution across all the TOCs which would have greatly exaggerated the differences between sections. All the unions agreed that the risk to the fundamental structure of the RPS was too great to risk losing, and a negotiated settlement would give far greater long-term security to all TOC section members.'

Travel rights in retirement

I feel I must reply to Gary Trotter's letter (*Journal*, February). I worked for British Rail at Didcot. BR was nationalised, and when I retired my basic wage was just over £12,000 a year as a train driver. My net pension today is £7,398.60 per year. The travel rights I receive were, and are, part of my conditions of service. Thatcher tried to take that away from us but ASLEF stopped them. Thanks to ASLEF negotiators you have free leisure travel and 75% off other train operators. It makes me wonder what your pension will be when you retire; certainly higher than mine. I travel to London three or four times a year in crowded trains where my wife and I, on most occasions, have to stand. You don't do so badly with the travel arrangements you have. Make the most of them now because, when you get too old, you don't use them as much.

Rob Allin, retired driver

Time to challenge all DOO

I couldn't agree more with Fraser Coats on the issue of DOO (*Journal*, February). Like Fraser, I was a trainee guard at the time of the Airdrie Bathgate dispute.

I had to share the ScotRail training facilities with the safety critical administrators and bosses who performed our duties whilst we were on strike! I, too, heard similar reasoning from ASLEF as to why they didn't fight this extension of DOO. With new electric trains set to be introduced on the Edinburgh to Glasgow via Falkirk High route I sincerely hope we fight any proposal to introduce DOO on this route. Any argument that 'we have already accepted DOO' should be challenged.

Indeed, I don't believe it is impossible for ASLEF to challenge DOO operation in its entirety. We have health & safety reps across DOO and guard-operated depots; a gathering of information on operational incidents could provide us with the evidence to argue for the reintroduction of guards. As a driver who works with guards I certainly don't wish to see that change.
Steven Nimmo, Edinburgh

Putting us in the picture

Many thanks for using my letter, and poem, in January's *Journal*. Please allow me to respond to the letter in February's edition by Brother Ian Jolly protesting at the graphic picture of the boy on the beach which accompanied my poem. I fully endorse the *Journal's* stance on this. Many members will remember the photo of a young girl running down a road in Vietnam in the 1960s with her back on fire. It brought home the reality of man's atrocities to man. And how many times have we seen explicit pictures of the Holocaust? To not display such descriptive material is to undermine the reality of these terrible events. 'What the eye doesn't see, the heart doesn't grieve over,' as they say.

I think the heart should grieve and disagree with the 'out of sight, out of mind' philosophy. Not wishing to sound too Utopian, but to witness the history of these atrocities by graphic illustration may help us to think and strive for a better world.

Michael Dodd, Dover, Kent

Let's have less politics

As a proud member of ASLEF, I would like to express my views on the *Journal* I receive every month.

Every time I open the *Journal*, I feel I have opened the *Labour Party Journal*. I cannot for the life of me understand why we must be affiliated with one political party. So come on, ASLEF, let's have less politics and more railway stories. I do not want to read about politics and how poor the Tories are, if I did I would buy another publication.

The *Journal* should be written by train drivers for train drivers and whilst politics may

be topical, at times, it should be the exception rather than the normal.

Jaime Campbell, Fratton GWR

GS Mick Whelan says: 'ASLEF is affiliated under rule to the Labour Party. It's in our rule book, it's part of what we do and who we are, part of our DNA, if you like. The *Journal* is not a railway magazine (there are plenty of those on the shelves of WH Smith). The *Journal* is a magazine for members of ASLEF and reports on all our activities, industrially and politically, as members of an active trade union.'

Referendum voting rules

If David Cameron wants the UK to remain in the EU, perhaps he should conduct the referendum under the same voting rules he is trying to impose on trade unions – or would that provoke cries of 'undemocratic' and 'unfair' from the Tory backbenches and create a political furore within his own party? Or maybe I'm being cynical about Tory double standards.

John Brooks, RMS

Backing for Tube drivers

We felt it appropriate to send, via the *Journal*, this letter of solidarity to our brothers and sisters on London Underground. It is startling that, in these modern times, companies feel they can undermine workers and recognised trade union in such a manner.

Not only that, but as your employer is the current Mayor of London, all tools at his disposal are being used to ridicule and alienate you. We fully support each and every one of you and hope for a successful outcome.

Wendy Hurst on behalf of Hitchin branch

Use it or lose it

I would like to thank Dave Weddle for his sterling work in keeping Southeastern reunions at Tonbridge going as long as he has; and all those who run reunions throughout the country. I encourage you to attend. If you don't use it you lose it.

Peter Smith, RMS Reporter

Midland, not Midlands

In a recent obituary I wrote 'Bill was a Midland man' as in London Midland and Scottish (LMS). It appeared as 'Bill was a Midlands man' which looks as if he came from the Midlands. Which he didn't. Old Bristol drivers were either Midland or Western (GWR). I hope you don't think I am being fussy!

Bernard Kennedy, Bristol

The editor writes: Not fussy, Bernard, but accurate. Sorry! The sub-editor who changed your copy has been taken out and shot.



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You can bend but never break me 'cos it only serves to make me

To mark International Women's Day on 8 March **MICK HOLDER** looks back through the pages of the *Locomotive Journal* to March (and April) 1916

IN A two page article entitled *Women in Industry* in the March 1916 edition of the *Journal Pax* – a bloke, inevitably, hiding behind a pseudonym – ponders the issue in an old fashioned way. But concludes: 'Great industries, like cotton, became totally dependent on women, and the sex barrier broke down. To the employer they were not women so much as operatives or hands, out of whose work the best possible profit must be spun. And still every effort of the reformer was met by the common argument that the home was the woman's sphere.

'Large numbers of women centred on the claim for the vote as the remedy, and their intense earnestness brought them into sharp conflict with law and order, early in the 20th century. Their agitation roused the whole country and, eventually, the House of Commons voted by a large majority in favour of woman suffrage. Some were in prison for the cause, and others were designing fresh assaults on the exclusive privileges of men when war clouds suddenly gathered over the whole horizon and a furious storm burst over Europe. Each country wanted men in millions to resist the enemy and, with the departure of men, women were no longer told that the home was their sphere.

READY AND WILLING

'Industry was their sphere, and by their services the country was able to carry on. The emergency found them ready and willing. Many of them are deriving great personal advantage out of the scarcity of men, but when the men come home, will it be found that the home fires have been kept burning, or have we put them out? The answer depends entirely on women, and their interests are so precisely those of men, and their nature so generous towards every genuine appeal, that I am hopeful about what the answer will be. We are told on all hands that women now, as never before, have proved their right to vote. They will be able to give much higher proof when the clouds have rolled away and, if they give it, he would be an austere old man indeed who failed to recognise it by conceding some measures towards sex equality.'

In contrast, in April 1916, the editor writes: 'At last female labour has to some extent invaded our own profession, and young women are now engaged as engine cleaners on the Midland Railway, London & North



Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway women workers pose on a 4-4-2 high flyer class loco at Low Moor near Bradford; many women worked as engine cleaners, guards and carriage cleaners during the Great War; paving the way for women, such as Northern Rail driver Tracie Wing, to work as drivers

Western Railway, and North Eastern Railway, and we understand other companies are contemplating their introduction. This is having no effect on the status of our calling as yet, and cannot have any lasting effect under any circumstances, as for many obvious reasons female labour can never be introduced on the footplate and, as the firemen will still be required in future who will, of necessity, have to receive the preliminary training as cleaners, we do not anticipate female cleaners being a permanent institution.

FILTHY AND DANGEROUS

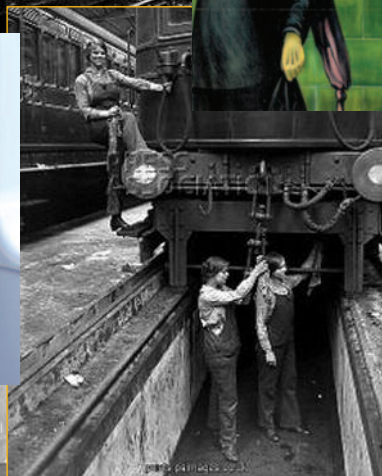
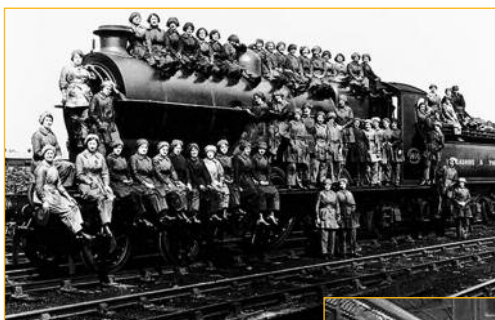
'In any case they cannot be used to any great extent in cutting down wages, for we cannot conceive any humans permitting their female kin to follow the filthy and dangerous occupation of engine cleaning for less wages than is at present paid to males. But while we may not fear this female labour as a menace to our calling, we cannot refrain as Britishers and human beings from protesting against the young women of our class, and the mothers of the future race, being employed as cleaners in locomotive sheds.

'It does not speak very well for the real patriotism of those responsible for these young women being brought into the very

real and serious and moral dangers of an engine shed. They must know, as we know, that very few sheds are equipped with proper and decent places for taking food, that scarcely any are provided with facilities for washing or cleanliness, and that in the majority of cases the lavatory accommodation is unsanitary and primitive in the extreme even for men, much less women.

COME TO STAY

'We understand that certain leaders have publicly expressed the belief that female labour on our railways has come to stay. Well! All we can say is that if there is any intention of its having come to stay in our engine sheds, nay, its very introduction, is one of the vilest blots on the already over-soiled escutcheon of the British people. It is easy to reconcile conscience while they are not our own that are being sacrificed, but let each man who knows try to imagine his own wife, daughter, sister or sweetheart engaged as a railway engine cleaner in our sheds of today. We are told it is to assist this country to win the war, but a certain man once said in days of old, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul!" Britain is coming near to losing her soul.'



EASY CHUNKY CHOC COOKIES

Lucy Knox celebrates Easter in style



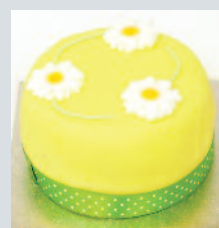
Beat 100g softened butter and 125g caster sugar in a bowl until pale and light. Then gradually beat in an egg. Mix in 150g self-raising flour followed by 150g dark chocolate cut into small chunks. Drop dessertspoons of the mix (well spaced out) on baking sheets lined with baking paper and bake for 10 to 15 mins in an oven preheated to 190C/170 fan/Gas 5. Remove from the oven to let them become firm enough to place on a wire cooling rack.



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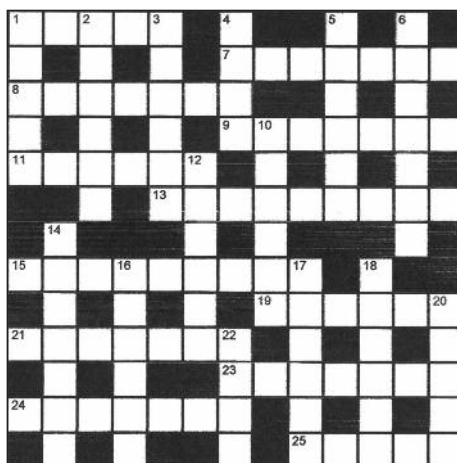


TO MUM WITH LOVE

Morrisons' deliciously moist Daisy Chain gift cake

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Prize Crossword 119 by Zebedee



Solution to Crossword 118

Across: 1 Hacks, 4 Dormant, 8 Nurture, 9 Field, 10 Cloth, 11 Golden, 13 Franco, 15 Isobar, 18 Lichen, 20 Ryder, 22 Rhino, 23 Apprise, 24 Modesty, 25 Eight. **Down:** 1 Handcuff, 2 Cordoba, 3 Slush, 4 Dredge, 5 Raffles, 6 Arete, 7 To do, 12 Prurient, 14 Cahoots, 16 Budding, 17 Infamy, 19 Iviad, 20 Rupee, 21 Brim.

Congratulations to **Chris Leeks** of **Great Barton, Bury St Edmunds**, who was last month's winner. The winner of this month's Prize Crossword will receive Marks & Spencer vouchers to the value of £25



Across

1 Skewered, grilled meat (5)
7 Medieval chemistry (7)
8 In keen fashion (7)
9 Slovenly, dirtiness (7)
11 Deplore (6)
13 Only country to leave European Community (9)
15 One taken for a ride (9)
19 Imitated (6)
21 Crowded, nestled together (7)
23 Pleasant, available service (7)
24 Range of hearing (7)
25 One from another planet (5)

Down

1 Tolling of a bell (5)
2 Having too many wives (6)
3 A strait; sounds like orientation (6)
4 Paths; methods (4)
5 Servitude (6)
6 Seize and detain (7)
10 Canada's largest province (6)
12 Hypnotised state (6)
14 Japanese warrior (7)
16 Deliberate cruelty (6)
17 Ivanhoe's girl (6)
18 Skimpy beachwear (6)
20 Senior member (5)
22 Items of information (4)

Name.....

Address.....

Postcode.....

Thanks for all your responses to the 118th ASLEF crossword in the February edition. If you successfully complete this month's crossword please send the solution to the Editor, ASLEF Journal, 77 St John Street, Clerkenwell, London, EC1M 4NN by 14 March

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If you are being harassed at work, bullied or discriminated against, and if your local, branch or district rep is unavailable, call the industrial relations department at union headquarters (020 7324 2400) or email info@aslef.org.uk. If you are arrested or interviewed by police and need legal assistance – day or night – call the members' emergency hotline on 0800 587 7530. ASLEF also provides first class legal advice free for members and dependents.



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SKILLS

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RAIL AND ROAD
RISK
LINESIDE EQUIPMENT
APATHY

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MANAGEMENT
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FREIGHT
BRIEFINGS
RIDDOR

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SKILLS

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